

Theater

NEW DRAMA GROUP GETS UNDERWAY

By IRENE SHERWOOD

The cast of "The Happy Time," the play to be given by the Bay Players on April 20 represent varied backgrounds and interests. They agree, however, in the desire to establish a year-round dramatic group in Duxbury.

The heart of the Samuel Taylor comedy is the Bonnard family—a French-Canadian group with a zest for living. There is Papa, who plays the violin in a local theatre, chain-smokes cigars and can't resist a weeping woman. The part is played by W. O. Sawyer, staff announcer for Plymouth's radio station WPLM. Bud, a Boston University graduate who came to the local station via WBUR, WHEB, and WAAB, knows his way around. See NEW—Page 8

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the stage, having appeared with the Malden Civic Theatre group, and the West Roxbury Stagecrafters. As Papa, he is debonair, tender, forceful.

Mama is Scotch, and finds the Frenchmen in her family a bit trying at times. She tries to meet their Gallic gaiety halfway, though; at one point we overhear her singing "Loch Lomond" in French. (How much further could a Scotswoman go in fraternizing?) Roberta Cutler plays the part of Mama with warmth and sincerity. Born in Boston, Roberta grew up in Mississippi and New York State, and graduated from Cornell University. She has appeared in plays in school, summer theatres and radio. Now a Duxbury housewife and mother, she paints as a hobby.

Others in Cast

The adolescent trying to find out what life is about is Bibi Bonnard, who has double trouble: the pretty French maid, and the tomboyish American girl next door. Richard Steele, in his first stage role, acts the part with authority. An eighth-grader in the Duxbury schools, Dick is interested in model trains, stamps, sports and girls—in that order.

Bibi's idol is his Uncle Desmonde, a dashing young man with a quick wit, roving eye and the largest collection of feminine garters this side of the Seine. Richard Woodsum plays the part as though it were created for him—or he for it. Born in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, he has lived in Duxbury for 18 years. After graduating from DHS he went to Brown University, where he majored in Philosophy and found time for dramatics. He is interested in music, having sung in college and local choruses.

A Character

Uncle Louis is different. It is probably enough to say that he drinks wine out of a water cooler. The nagging of wife Felice has led him to withdraw from life almost completely; yet when Bibi is faced with a serious problem, he joins the other Bonnard men in acting with speed and audacity. Louis and Felice are played with engaging verve by Roger and Mar-

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jorie Jarvis. Both Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis majored in music at Westminster College, and Roger now teaches music in Duxbury schools. He is a lifeguard at the beach in the summer. Mrs. Jarvis finds time to take part in musical activities.

Grandpa Bonnard has the sort of blithe jauntiness that could well set geriatrics back several centuries. "Toujours l'amour" is his motto as he pursues the Widow LaTouche and spurns the doctor's suggested diet of wet toast and mushed eggs. Donald Prigge, who plays Grandpa convincingly despite nearly a half-century discrepancy in age, got his dramatic training at Trinity College. A native of Trenton, New Jersey, he took time out between freshman and sophomore years to serve with the navy in the Pacific during World War II. He teaches English in Duxbury, besides being active in St. John's Church, the South Shore Choral Society, and the Center Theatre. He appeared there last summer in *Don Giovanni*, *La Boheme*, and *The Mikado*.

Zut Alors!

Mignonette is the kind of girl who just naturally precipitates crises. An out-of-work chanteuse who loses her job with an acrobatic team, she becomes the Bonnards' maid and indirectly brings about the reformation of Desmonde and the transformation of Bibi. JoAnn Collins is delightfully unaffected in the part. A graduate of Leland Powers School of Radio and Theatre, she has had experience in both fields. Now a housewife and the mother of three boys, she has been seen locally in Legion minstrel shows.

When she finally gets the braces off her teeth, Sally—the American girl next door—is very attractive. Even Bibi realizes it. Betsy Sterling, although only an eighth-grader, brings stage experience to the part. She has taken singing and dancing lessons for years, and appeared as one of the dancing priestesses in the Center production of *Aida* last summer.

Dr. Gagnon and Mr. Frye appear just once each in the play, but the appearances are memorable and hilarious. Donald Fowke underplays the part of Dr. Gagnon with telling effect, while Hugh Cronister's Mr. Frye, the hypocritical teacher who gets caught reading the magazine he has condemned, is a perfect foil for the menacing Bonnards. Fowke, who has a master's degree from Boston University, teaches in the Commercial Department at DHS, where he has organized a camera club. Hugh, a graduate of Earlham College and Columbia University, directed dramatics at George School in Pennsylvania.

where he taught before coming to Duxbury. Outside of school he is interested in music and teen-age work camps.

Louis and Felice hope their daughter may find a husband in Alfred—the stabilized Alfred. This minor but amusing part is deftly played by Oscar Verlain, a newcomer to Duxbury who teaches speech at Harvard.

The production is being whipped into shape by Lawrence Dunn, the director, who teaches mathematics and science at DHS. Born in Denmark, Maine, he had experience in dramatics at the University of Maine as an undergraduate, and later as a graduate student. He worked for three years with the Camden Hills summer theatre. He says, "It won't be surprising if, for a while, members of the cast continue to talk broken English. They have worked long and hard, but they will feel rewarded if their efforts result in general interest in a community drama group."